UNITED NATIONS

Daily Highlights

Department of Public Information • Central News Section • New York

Prepared by Central News

DH/2048
21 December 1995

THURSDAY HIGHLIGHTS

* Security Council condemns human rights violations committed in Srebrenica, Zepa, Banja Luka and Sanski Most earlier in year; notes substantial evidence Bosnian Serbs carried out mass executions.

* Security Council establishes International Police Task Force and United Nations civilian office to help implement Bosnian Peace Agreement.

* Security Council stresses need for full implementation of Lusaka Protocol; says Angolan parties must take concrete actions to put peace process on irreversible course.

* Secretary-General to visit Kuwait, Yemen, Eritrea, Egypt, Italy and United Kingdom in coming weeks.

* Fiftieth anniversary commemorative session highlighted international commitment to United Nations and to reform process, General Assembly President says.

* Iraq promises complete cooperation with United Nations Special Commission and Security Council, UNSCOM Chairman reports.

* Member States owe United Nations $2.5 billion as of 16 December; $580 million owed to regular budget and $1.9 billion to peace-keeping and International Tribunals.

* * *

The Security Council today strongly condemned all violations of international humanitarian law and of human rights in the former Yugoslavia and demanded that all concerned comply fully with their obligations in that regard. It reiterated that all those who committed such violations would be held individually responsible for them. The Council particularly condemned the violations in the areas of Srebrenica, Zepa, Banja Luka and Sanski Most as

(more)

For information media—not an official record

described in the Secretary-General's report of 27 November and showing a consistent pattern of summary executions, rape and large-scale disappearances.

By unanimously adopting resolution 1034 (1995), the Council noted with the utmost concern the substantial evidence that a large number of men in the area of Srebrenica, and possibly in Bratunac and Potocari, had been summarily executed by Bosnian Serb and paramilitary forces. It condemned in the strongest terms the commission of such acts. The Council reiterated its demand that the Bosnian Serbs give immediate and unimpeded access to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and other international agencies to persons displaced or missing from Srebrenica, Zepa, Banja Luka and Sanski Most who were within Serb-controlled areas of Bosnia.

The Council affirmed that the violations of humanitarian law and human rights in the areas in question from July to October must be fully investigated by the relevant United Nations and other international organizations and institutions. It noted that the International Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia had issued indictments against the Bosnian Serb leaders Radovan Karadzic and Ratko Mladic for their direct and individual responsibilities for the atrocities committed against the Bosnian Muslims of Srebrenica in July. The Council reiterated its demand that the Bosnian Serbs give immediate and unrestricted access to the areas in question, including for the purpose of investigation of the atrocities.

* * *

In another meeting today, the Security Council established for a period of one year a United Nations civilian police force known as the International Police Task Force (IPTF) to implement Annex 11 of the Bosnian Peace Agreement. It also established a United Nations civilian office with the responsibilities set out in the Secretary-General's report of 13 December, and endorsed the arrangements set out in the report. The Council took that action by unanimously adopting resolution 1035 (1995).

The Council noted with satisfaction that the IPTF and the United Nations civilian office would be under the authority of the Secretary-General and subject to coordination as appropriate by the High Representative. It requested the Secretary-General to submit reports about the work of the IPTF and the civilian office accordingly.

* * *

Also today, the Security Council reiterated its concern at the slow progress in implementation of the Lusaka Protocol. In a statement by its President, the Council stressed the importance of full implementation of all aspects of the Angolan peace process. It underlined that several important tasks remained incomplete, including the exchange of detailed military

information, the release of all prisoners, the redeployment of those Government troops near National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA) quartering areas, and the resolution of the issue of mercenaries.

Noting that the deployment of United Nations Angola Verification Mission (UNAVEM III) troops was nearly complete, the Council expressed disappointment at the slow pace in which the quartering process had proceeded. It called on UNITA and the Angolan Government to fulfil their commitments regarding the expeditious quartering and demobilization of former combatants, the quartering of the rapid reaction police, and the return of the Angolan Armed Forces (FAA) to the nearest barracks. The Council expressed deep concern at the delays in establishing modalities for the integration of the armed forces, and urged the parties to continue military talks without interruption.

The Council expressed grave concern about continued violations of the cease-fire and military offensives, particularly events in the north-west. It called on both parties to refrain from military activities or troop movements which led to resumed hostilities and to implement without delay the disengagement plan being prepared by UNAVEM III. It emphasized that Angolans themselves bore ultimate responsibility for restoring peace and stability in their country. The Council stressed that concrete actions were urgently needed to put the peace process on an irreversible course. It noted that continued support for UNAVEM III would depend on the extent to which the parties demonstrated their political will to achieve a lasting peace.

* * *

Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali will leave New York this weekend for a three-day visit to Kuwait, a United Nations spokesman announced today. He will meet with the Emir of Kuwait, the Crown Prince, the President of the National Assembly and the Foreign Minister.

The Secretary-General will then visit Yemen for two days, where he will meet with the President and members of the Cabinet. He will travel on to Eritrea, having been invited to consult with the Government on the situation in the region, particularly the dispute with Yemen over Hanish Island. He will not be mediating in that dispute as he has not been asked to do so by both parties.

After Eritrea, the Secretary-General will pay a "semi-working" visit to Egypt. He will then travel to Italy, where he will meet with senior Government officials and participate in Italy's celebration of the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations. He will also be received by the Pope.

On the last leg of his trip, Mr. Boutros-Ghali will go to London to participate in a celebration of the fiftieth anniversary of the first meeting of the General Assembly, which took place in January 1946. He will also meet

with the United Kingdom Prime Minister and Foreign Minister, before returning to New York around mid-January.

* * *

The General Assembly's special session commemorating the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations was a success not only because of the large number of Heads of State and government who participated in it, but because of their statements of support for the United Nations and for reform of the Organization, according to Assembly President Diogo Freitas do Amaral. He made that comment in a press conference at Headquarters today.

The President emphasized the importance of United Nations reform. That process was under way and five Working Groups would begin their substantive work on 15 January. The Working Group on an Agenda for Peace would consider the issue of preventive diplomacy and United Nations sanctions, while the Working Group on an Agenda for Development would review the Vice-Chairman's report published last Summer. The Working Group on the Security Council would consider the questions of the Council's enlargement and its methods of work. The Working Group on the financial situation would deal with assessments and arrears, while the Working Group on the strengthening of the Organization would address the report of the General Assembly and reform of Secretariat.

Disarmament had been another important issue during the fiftieth session, the President noted. The Assembly had dealt with the issues of a nuclear test-ban treaty, the prevention of an arms race in outer space and the register of conventional arms. It had also established a Preparatory Committee to draft a convention for the creation of an international criminal court, an issue which had been discussed for some years. The Assembly had also discussed the follow-up to the Copenhagen Summit on Social Development and the Beijing Women's Conference. He highlighted the fact that 181 of the 185 Member States had become parties to the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

* * *

Iraq's attitude towards cooperation with the United Nations Special Commission and the Security Council has changed from one where ultimatums with deadlines were delivered to one of promises of complete cooperation and transparency, without time-limits, according to the Executive Chairman of the Commission, Rolf Ekeus. In his latest report to the Council, dated 17 December, he said Iraq admitted that it had not taken all actions required of it under resolution 687 (1991). However, it now insisted that its declared policy was to do so as fast as possible.

In the last six months, Iraq had provided substantial quantities of documentation and was continuing to do so, Mr. Ekeus continued. The new information required further investigation and verification and it was not yet possible to give a firm assessment of the extent to which all elements of

Iraq's proscribed programmes had been fully disclosed. The Commission believed that many of the most important documents were still being withheld from it. When that documentation was made available, it should provide the speediest way of clearing up outstanding issues.

While the Commission welcomed Iraq's repeated assurances regarding full cooperation, there were still instances where full disclosure was not made and misleading statements were put forward, he noted. Likewise, information that should have been volunteered in support of a policy of complete transparency was not provided. The issue thus remained whether two policies were being pursued, one calling for full cooperation and the other for concealing proscribed activities as long as possible. The Commission hoped that the first would prevail and that the second would be abandoned. If Iraq could resolve those problems, it should be possible to clear up the remaining issues in the near future.

* * *

As of 16 December, Member States owed the United Nations a total of $2.5 billion, according to the latest update on the Organization's financial situation. Of that amount, $580 million was for assessments for the regular budget and $1.9 billion was for peace-keeping operations and the International Tribunals.

Correction: The first paragraph on page 3 of the Daily Highlights of 20 December should have read as follows:

Mr. Al-Ashtal briefed the Secretary-General on the latest developments in the conflict between Yemen and Eritrea over Hanish Island. The Council of Ministers in Sana'a had just issued a communique which made three demands: the release of all Yemeni prisoners of war; the total withdrawal of Eritrean forces from the island; and negotiations to delineate the maritime border between the two countries. Meanwhile, the Government of Yemen would welcome any good offices initiative by the Secretary-General aimed at settling the conflict peacefully.

* *** *